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*Iran Pamphlet 117* 5  
*P.L. 5, 1851*

# INTERNATIONAL REDUCTION OF ARMAMENTS.

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S P E E C H



OF

RICHARD COBDEN, ESQ., M.P.,

IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

ON THE 24TH JUNE, 1851,

ON MOVING THAT

" An Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that she will direct the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to enter into communication with the Government of France, and endeavour to prevent in future that rivalry of warlike preparation in time of peace which has hitherto been the policy of the two Governments, and to promote, if possible, a Mutual Reduction of Armaments."

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JOHN CASSELL, 335, STRAND.



# S P E E C H

OF

RICHARD COBDEN, ESQ., M.P.,

UPON

INTERNATIONAL REDUCTION OF ARMAMENTS.

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Mr. COBDEN said:—The resolution I have now to move is a logical sequence to the discussion in which the House has just been engaged. It has been said, in the course of that discussion, that it is impossible for certain interests to support the present amount of taxation. One of the motives that has influenced me in bringing forward this resolution is, that I thought it was so far suited to the present circumstances of the country that it would tend to produce a diminution of burdens and a relief from taxation. I wish the real scope and purport of my motion to be understood at the outset, so that it may not be misrepresented in the debate. I do not propose, then, to discuss or entertain the amount of the armies maintained upon the Continent. When I speak of warlike preparations I allude to naval establishments and fortifications. Our army is maintained without reference to the armies of the Continent, and the armies of the Continent are never framed or regulated with reference to the army of England. In speaking of standing armies, which I regard as the standing curse of the present generation (cheers), the question is usually complicated by considerations of a purely domestic character. I am told that the armies of the Continent are not kept up by the Governments for the sake of meeting foreign enemies, but for the purpose of repressing their own subjects. This being the case, I am asked how I can persuade foreign Governments to reduce their armies, seeing that they are necessary for the maintenance of internal order, as

it is called. But no such argument applies to my proposition, which is confined exclusively to the maritime armaments of England and France. I will, however, say that I believe that if I can succeed in my motion with France, the example of the two countries will be at once followed by other countries in the reduction of their navies, and that if a reduction in the naval forces and fortifications of England and France takes place, other countries will afterwards follow with a reduction in their armies. I presume it will be admitted that the maintenance of a naval force beyond what is necessary, in the time of peace, for the protection of commerce against piracy, and in the intercourse with barbarous countries, is an evil, but I shall be told it is a necessary evil. If I ask why, it will be said, because other countries are armed as well as ourselves. Well, admitting that, and assuming that France and England maintain a certain amount of naval force, not for the purpose of protecting commerce, or acting as the police of the seas, but in order to hold themselves in a menacing attitude towards each other, that is a compound evil; it is not merely a pure waste of the amount of money which that portion of the navies of the two countries costs—there is also the sacrifice of the productive labour of the sailors, shipwrights, &c. and I am prepared to contend that it would be better and more economical to vote that money and throw it into the sea, for we should then save the labour which is employed upon ships of war, and which might be then productively occupied. Nor will the old hackneyed argument, that “to preserve peace we must be prepared for war,” apply in my case. What I seek is a mutual reduction of armaments which will leave the two countries in the same relative position as at present. These two countries will be equally well prepared for warfare with each other if they reduce their force to one, as if they both maintain their force at twenty, as their relative proportions will remain the same, and no advantage can be gained in the event of hostilities by keeping up this unnecessary force. I feel bound, in the outset of my argument, to prove the truth of my assumption that England does arm herself against France, and that France returns the compliment, and that this has been for many years the systematic policy of successive Governments in the two countries. I am prepared to show that it is the avowed policy of both countries to arm themselves, so that each may be prepared to meet the armament provided by the other country. In doing so I shall be obliged, contrary to my usual practice, to trouble the House with a few quotations. In the debate in the French Chamber of Deputies in 1846, when a motion



was made for a vote of 95,000,000*f.* for a great augmentation of the navy, M. Thiers said:—

“There is nothing offensive to England in citing her example when our navy is under consideration, any more than there would be in speaking of Prussia, Austria, or Russia, if we were deliberating upon the strength of our army. We pay England the compliment of thinking only of her when determining our naval force; we never heed the ships which sail forth from Trieste or Venice—we care only for those which leave Portsmouth or Plymouth.”

I am told the Noble Lord below (Lord Palmerston) was in the Chamber of Deputies when the speech was made. The Noble Viscount (Palmerston), in the debate on the financial statement in 1848, only two years afterwards, said—

“So far from its affording any cause of offence to France that we should measure our navy by such a standard, I am sure any one who follows the debates in the French Chambers, when their naval estimates come under discussion, must know that they follow the same course, adopting the natural and only measure in such cases, namely, the naval force which other nations may have at the same time.”

In the same debate on the financial statement in 1848 the noble lord (J. Russell), after showing that the expenditure for the navy in France had increased since 1833 from £2,280,000 to £3,902,000, proceeds to observe—

“I am not alluding at all—it never has been the custom to allude, and I think we are quite right in that respect—to what may be the military force of foreign powers. I do not therefore allude at all to the amount of the standing army that is kept up in France, or in Austria, or in Prussia, or in other foreign countries; but so great an increase in naval estimates, I think, does require the attention, and at all events should be within the knowledge, of the House.”

I can give several other extracts from the speeches of leading statesmen, and from the newspaper press, of both countries, to the same effect, but I think it will not be necessary to trouble the House with many more, for it will hardly be denied that the two governments have been, up to the present time, running a race of warlike preparations. I have two objections to that policy; first, it is an irritating policy, having a constant tendency to increase the evil, and to which I see no limits unless it is in some way met; and secondly, it leads each country into the error of proceeding upon exaggerated reports of the prepara-

tions of the other. No explanations are ever offered or received, and both Governments are left to act upon their erroneous impressions. I found, when these reports were afterwards examined into, that they bore the traces of great exaggeration. I will mention an instance. Our naval force was greatly increased in 1845. The French were alarmed. A committee of the Chamber of Peers was appointed to inquire into the state of the French navy. They made a report. In that report, drawn up by Baron Dupin, they said—

“ We have now to announce the execution of a great scheme which the English Government is pursuing with its usual foresight, and which cannot fail to have a vast influence upon the naval policy of other countries.” (The report then goes on to state that under the modest pretence of providing steam guard-ships, the British Admiralty is converting eight sailing-vessels into formidable steam batteries, capable of remaining fifteen days at sea; that they will be completed during the year, and that it was expected they would be doubled in the following year.) “ If,” continues the report, “ we compare the powers of destruction possessed by the broadsides of these floating fortresses with those of the most formidable batteries ever employed by an army upon land for the destruction of fortified places, we shall then know what to think of an armament provided under the modest and defensive guise of steam guard-ships. It is, then, for France an absolute necessity to prepare an armament of a similar character and of equal force, so that we may have nothing to dread in future, in case of a possible misunderstanding with England.”

Now, in that report it was broadly stated that eight steam guard-ships were being prepared by the British Government against France; and there was some ground for it, inasmuch as eight large ships had been ordered by our Admiralty to be converted into screw-propellers; but when I sat on the Committee on the Navy, in 1848, I found, on examining the authorities of the Admiralty, that only four of these steam guard-ships were ever completed, and that, instead of being of the character stated in the report, they were only capable of going to sea for five days instead of fifteen, inasmuch as they were not prepared for carrying a large supply of coal. I will give another illustration of how the two countries played at seesaw in this respect. I have stated that, in consequence of the increase of our navy in 1845, France had voted a large augmentation of her naval force in 1846. Mr. Ward, who was then Secretary of the Navy, came down to the House of Commons the following session (of

1847), and made this a plea for a further increase of our navy estimates. After giving a detailed and glowing account of the augmentation of the French estimates, made in the previous year by the Chamber of Deputies, he added :—" Now he found no fault with France for these things. France did what she thought right and necessary for the maintenance of her position. She set us, in many respects, a noble example. These facts, it appeared to him, ought to be a lesson to us. They imposed a very heavy responsibility on those who were in power in this country." But the British Government could not stop there. Our navy was augmented until it reached upwards of 40,000 men. (Hear, hear.) That produced its fruits in France. I have in my hand an extract from a report of the National Assembly on the Navy in 1849. It says :—

" Let us see whether foreign powers really show us the example of a reduction of naval armaments. This very spring England has voted 40,000 ~~mss~~ for the sea service. This vote will amount to £6,000,000 sterling, without including the cost of artillery, &c., which is defrayed out of the Ordnance estimates. We content ourselves with twenty-four vessels of the line afloat, and sixteen in an advanced state upon the stocks, for our peace establishment; the English have seventy afloat, besides those in course of building. With our peace establishment, such as it was fixed in 1846, we should be one-third inferior in strength to the English navy."

But this farce of "beggars my neighbour" will not be completely played out until I have given one more quotation from a speech of the First Lord of the Admiralty, being a direct response to the last menace from the other side of the Channel. In moving the Naval Estimates for the present year, the right hon. gentleman the First Lord of the Admiralty said, and it was this remark of the right hon. gentleman that induced me to give notice of this motion :—

" It was impossible to fix upon what was necessary in their own establishment without looking to the establishments of foreign countries. He might, however, observe, that they had had sufficient proof, in the course of the last year, that a gallant, active, and intelligent people, not far from themselves, had not by any means neglected their naval establishments and naval power."

And the right hon. gentleman went on to give a description of the naval evolutions at Cherbourg, and that great fortified place was held up to this country with a formidable account of its preparation. Now, will it be credited by the House that at almost the moment when these words

were being uttered by our First Lord of the Admiralty, the French Government were quoting our example to justify an increased outlay for the improvement of this very naval arsenal. (Hear.) I hold in my hand a report of a commission of the National Assembly recommending the outlay of 6,800,000*l.* to continue the defensive works at Cherbourg; and it bears date the 11th of April, 1851. It says:—

“If we would be fully alive to the necessity of no longer leaving in a defenceless state the point most important, and certainly the most menaced, upon the whole coast of the Channel, we have only to listen to the opinion entertained of Cherbourg by the English, and especially by one of their most renowned sailors, Admiral Napier, in his recent letter to the *Times*. We have only, in fact, to cast our eye upon the map and to observe the vast works which the British Admiralty are now executing at Jersey and Alderney for the purpose of creating a rival establishment to our own. This is the more necessary, inasmuch as the railroads and steamboats in England are every day increasing, and their powerful means of transportation give to those who possess them the facility of concentrating upon any given point a sudden expedition. We must be on our guard against so powerful an enemy, situate at so short a distance from our shores, and who, by the aid of steam, will be henceforth independent of wind, tides, and currents, which formerly impeded the operations of sailing-vessels.”

One of the best things this House has done for a long time was to suspend, the other night, the works for the fortification of Alderney. (Hear, hear). These works are a menace and an affront to France, and are meant as a rival to Cherbourg. Now Cherbourg, as every one knows who has sailed along that coast, besides being a naval arsenal, is a most useful, valuable, and indispensable port of refuge for merchant ships (hear, hear); in fact, a breakwater at Cherbourg might be made by subscription from all the maritime states of Europe, so important is it to all who sail along that coast. But Alderney can mean nothing but a fortified place, within a few miles of France, to menace that country. It can never be useful as a harbour of refuge, for no merchant vessels will venture near it. These fortifications were projected during a panic in England, caused by the cry of a French invasion; and if any one could get at the professional springs set in motion to create that panic, it would be a most instructive history. In 1845 the country was led to suppose that we were to be invaded by some maritime power. A number of engineers had a roving commission to go along the coast and point out

places where money could be spent in raising fortifications, and when they had exhausted the coast of England they went over to Jersey and Alderney. (Hear, hear). I have heard the evidence of some of these gallant gentlemen before the Committee on the Navy Estimates. One of them said he went down to Plymouth—he found the people there expecting their throats would be cut the next day; and, said he, “strange as it may appear, I shared their alarm.” (A laugh). It was whilst under the influence of that panic that we projected our harbours of refuge, as they were called, upon which it was suggested between £4,000,000 and £5,000,000 should be expended. It was under the same panic that the works at Keyham, upon which £1,200,000 is to be wasted, and the works at Alderney, which are to cost four times as much as the fee-simple of the whole island, were projected. I do not mean to bring these facts in accusation against any particular government or party in this country, nor do I intend to charge England with being worse than her neighbour beyond the Channel; both are equally to blame, and it is very difficult to say on which side the greater culpability is to be found. I may, in justification of these remarks, appeal to the authority of one of the most accomplished and amiable men in France, almost the only man who, in 1847 and 1848, had the moral courage to attempt to stem the torrent of prejudice and passion which was hurrying us into these warlike preparations. Monsieur Michel Chevalier, in a pamphlet which was noticed with merited commendation by the noble lord at the head of the government (Lord John Russell), in his Budget speech of 1848, stated that whilst we were projecting our fortifications on the British coast, France, at the same time, was projecting works to the extent of between £10,000,000 and £11,000,000 sterling, without including the fortifications of Paris, and he gave a comparative estimate of the increased expenditure both of France and England, from 1838 to 1847, showing that in that period England and France had respectively augmented their naval expenditure to the extent of between £13,000,000 and £14,000,000 sterling, and that, both going on in that neck and neck race of folly, the two countries had, in fact, spent nearly the same amount. Now, the practical question which I have to ask is, can any means be devised for putting an end to this foolish international rivalry? Is there a remedy for what everybody will admit to be a great evil? Is it possible to bring human reason to bear upon the mass of folly, waste, and extravagance, which I have been describing? Is Diplomacy unable to bring the two nations to a

better understanding of their true interests? I know that I shall be asked to quote a precedent for what I am recommending, and I think there is some force in the precedent I am about to adduce. I will not refer to the more remote examples of the last century, such as the agreement for the demolition of Dunkirk, or the treaty for mutual reduction of armaments entered into between France and England in 1787, or the convention called the Armed Neutrality; nor will I allude to the treaties for suppressing the slave-trade, which defined the amount of force to be maintained by the contracting parties; but I will cite a modern example, bearing, as I believe, upon the case under consideration. The case to which I shall refer is that of America and England, for limiting the force to be kept up on the lakes of America. I will give the text of the treaty:—

“Arrangements between the United States and Great Britain, between Richard Rush, Esq., acting as Secretary of the Department of State, and Charles Bagot, his Britannic Majesty’s Envoy Extraordinary, &c., April, 1817:—The naval force to be maintained upon the American lakes by His Majesty and the Government of the United States shall henceforth be confined to the following vessels on each side, that is:—On Lake Ontario, to one vessel not exceeding 100 tons burden, and armed with one eighteen-pound cannon; on the upper lakes to two vessels not exceeding like burden each, and armed with like force; on the waters of Lake Champlain, to one vessel not exceeding like burden, and armed with like force. All other armed vessels on these lakes shall be forthwith dismantled, and no other vessels of war shall be there built or armed. If either party should hereafter be desirous of annulling this stipulation, and should give notice to that effect to the other party, it shall cease to be binding after the expiration of six months from the date of such notice. The naval force so to be limited shall be restricted to such services as will in no respect interfere with the proper duties of the armed vessels of the other party.”

Now it will be remembered that during our war with the United States in 1814, the greatest efforts were made on both sides to secure a naval supremacy upon the lakes, which was considered by the highest military authorities to be indispensable to the success of the land operations of the armies. Upon this subject the Duke of Wellington, who was then at Paris, thus expressed himself in a letter addressed to Sir George Murray:—

“I have told the Ministers repeatedly that a naval superiority on the

lakes is a *sine qua non* of success in war on the frontier of Canada, even if our object should be solely defensive; and I hope that when you are there they will take care to secure it for you."

So that in case of any rupture between England and America the occupation of the lakes was considered by that great authority as necessary to success; and yet, notwithstanding that, immediately after the war the two countries had the good sense to limit the amount of force upon the lakes. And what has been the result of that friendly convention? Not only has it had the effect of reducing the force, but of abolishing it altogether. (Hear). When I sat on the committee, I did not find that any vessel was left on the lakes as an armed force. From the moment that it was known that there was to be no rivalry in the armaments of the two countries, neither party cared to maintain even the moderate force which they were entitled to keep up. And this is, in my mind, the natural result of such a friendly understanding; and I believe it will be found that, in the event of England and France entering into a negotiation for the reduction of their naval forces, the effect will be that from the moment they are satisfied of each other's sincerity, all desire for maintaining an armed force will cease on both sides. I admit that the case of England and France, and that of England and America, to which I am referring, are somewhat different; but yet I ask whether it is not possible to devise some plan, if not by actual convention, as in the case of America, yet by some communication with France, in which we may say, "We are mutually building so many vessels each year; our relative force is as three to two, and if we increase it tenfold still the relations will be the same. Will it not be possible by a friendly understanding to agree that we shall not go on in this rivalry, but that we shall put an equal check upon this mutual injury." I may be told that to undertake a reduction of forces in every part of the aqueous globe is a very different thing to the regulation of the naval establishments upon the lakes of Canada. But I will remind the House that our naval force is allotted to certain "stations," which are defined according to well-known geographical limits. For instance, there is the East India station, the Pacific station, the Mediterranean station. Now the force we maintain on those stations has always borne a certain relation to the force of other countries. I remember, for instance, that the late First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Auckland, in his evidence before the Navy Committee, stated ~~that~~ our force in the Pacific was framed with reference to the amount of force kept there by France

and America. Now, I ask, is it impossible to come to a friendly arrangement respecting these stations similar to that which has been so completely successful on the Canadian lakes? Why, it seems to me that the convention fixing the number of cruisers to be kept up by the great naval powers on the coast of Africa is very nearly a case in point, in which what I contend for is completely accomplished. But I may be told, I am dealing merely with France, and forgetting that there are other maritime states; but I contend that there are only two countries besides ourselves of any importance as first-rate naval powers, namely, France and the United States. America has very wisely set us the example of a reduction of her navy—in fact, she has not a line-of-battle ship now in commission. The only one she had last year at sea, the *Ohio*, has been brought home from the Pacific and laid up in ordinary; and the works in her dockyards, so far as relate to ships of the line on the stocks, have been suspended. When California was discovered, America might have placed two or three line-of-battle ships off that coast, but she withdrew the only one she had there, and turned her artisans and shipwrights to construct some of the most magnificent steam-vessels that were ever seen; and her commerce is extending as *fast* as our own. The hon. member for Stafford (Mr. Urquhart) may, perhaps, refer me to Russia, but all history proves that no country that has not a mercantile marine can be a great naval country. You may build up a large navy as Mehemet Ali did, and put his fellahs on board, but if you have not a mercantile marine you never can become a great naval power. (Hear, hear.) Russia has, no doubt, a great number of ships at Cronstadt—I have seen them all—but if Russia has power she keeps it at home, and there may be very good reasons why she does so, for I have heard remarks from American sailors lying at Cronstadt to the effect that her vessels are not much to be admired. She has about 30,000 sailors, but they are men taken from the interior, unaccustomed to sea duty, and are, of course, a complete laughing-stock to British seamen. I do not consider that any country like America or England, carrying on an enormous commerce, and possessing hundreds of thousands of experienced sailors, can ever be endangered by a country having no mercantile marine. With reference to our distant stations, at all events, America offers no objection, but rather invites us to this course by her example. France is the only country that presents herself with any force upon foreign stations; and, I ask, is it impossible to carry out the same rule in regard to France that has been agreed to with



the United States, or are we to go on *ad infinitum* wasting our resources and imposing unnecessary taxes in order to keep up that waste? I may be told, probably, that this is not the proper moment for such resolutions as this. I think that it is the proper moment. (Hear, hear.) I believe that nations are disposed for peace, and I am glad to be able to cite the opinion of the noble lord at the head of the Government, and of the noble lord the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, that there is a great disposition on the part of the people towards maintaining national peace. I hold in my hand, also, an extract from the most powerful vehicle of public opinion—a paper which certainly everybody will admit has the best possible opportunity of knowing what is the tendency of public opinion throughout the world—I mean the *Times* newspaper. That journal, in a recent leading article, said—

“ Wars of nation against nation are not the evil of the day, but the contests between classes of the same country. Europe is already so much governed by the representatives of taxpayers, that an European war is an affair of improbable occurrence. Even in countries where constitutional government is not understood, the ruling power would be very slow, for its own sake, to impose taxes for purposes of war. Europe has remained at peace, although European society has gone through convulsions in the course of the last five years of which history presents no example since the breaking up of the Roman empire.”

If there is not a disposition on the part of the people of the Continent to go to war, where is the use of, or the necessity for, the enormous naval force which France keeps up? Surely there must be as great a disposition on the part of that country as of this to reduce the burdens of taxation, by diminishing expenditure. I have conversed with French statesmen upon this subject, and when I have put it to them, as I have to English statesmen, they have admitted that the plan which I propose would be most desirable for them. They said that they kept up their navy because England kept up hers, but that it would be the greatest possible relief to them to be able to reduce it. I believe that if our Government were to make a friendly proposal to France, it would be met in an amicable spirit. France does not pretend that she is so strong as England by sea, and she does not aim at being thought so, for it is invariably admitted in the discussions in the French Chamber that she has no pretensions to rival England in the amount of her naval force. England may therefore take the initiative in recommending a reduction of armaments, without the danger of compromising her dignity

or of having her motives misrepresented; and if a friendly proposal of this sort be made to France, I fully believe it will be accepted. (Hear, hear.) This leads me to another view of the subject, which illustrates the utter absurdity of the course pursued by the two countries. If England is the more powerful by sea, France is invulnerable by land, so that while the spirit of rivalry is maintained by two countries so equal in point of resources, taking the army and navy together, it is impossible one can ever gain a permanent advantage over the other. If one were exceedingly weak and the other strong, and the strong could have some extraordinary motive to possess the weaker, I might despair to convince by argument; but the case of England and France is very different. Whenever England increases her armaments and fortifications France does the same, and *vice versa*. We are pursuing a course, therefore, which holds out to neither country a prospect of any permanent gain. We are not actuated by motives of ambition or aggression, but are simply acting for self-defence, and no rational mind in either country supposes anything else than that a war between the two countries must be injurious to both. (Hear, hear.) Both nations, therefore, have an interest in putting an end to this mutual rivalry and hostility by the course which I recommend. I shall be anxious to hear the opinions of the noble lord at the head of the foreign department (Lord Palmerston) upon this subject. I do not ask him to carry out the terms of this motion in any particular form. My resolution merely says that a communication should be entered into in a spirit of amity with France. I do not stipulate for a diplomatic note in this form or that. I shall be perfectly satisfied if I see the attempt made, for the objection that I have to our present policy is, that there never has been an attempt made to stay the progress of that rivalry in warlike preparations of which I complain—there never has been anything done that could by possibility tend to bring the two countries to an understanding. All I stipulate for is, that diplomacy shall put itself a little more into harmony with the spirit of the age, and occupy itself in promoting the welfare of the taxpayers, and forwarding the interests of humanity at large, instead of busying itself in petty intrigues and technical formalities, which have ceased to exercise the slightest influence over the fate of nations. (Hear, hear.) I shall be told that the object I have in view, however good in itself, cannot be promoted by Governments; that it must be the result of the slow progress of public opinion, and of the gradual operations of individual enterprise. Why, public opinion and

individual enterprise are doing much to bring England and France together! (Hear, hear.) Compare the present state of things with that which existed twenty-five-years ago. I remember that at that time there were but two posts a-week between London and Paris for the conveyance of letters. Down to 1848 thirty-four hours were allowed for transmitting a post to Paris; we now go in eleven hours. Where there used to be thousands passing and repassing, there are now tens of thousands. Formerly no man could be heard in our smaller towns and villages speaking a foreign language, let it be what language it might, but the rude and vulgar passer-by would call him a Frenchman, and very likely insult him. We have seen a great change in all that. With the increase of intercourse, old prejudices have abated; a better knowledge of each other has produced an increase of respect and confidence; until at length, in this the first year of the second half of the nineteenth century, we have seen a most important change. We are witnessing now what a few years ago no one could have predicted as possible. We see men meeting together from all the countries in the world, more like the gatherings of nations in former times, when they came up for a great religious festival—we find men speaking different languages, and bred in different habits, associating in one common temple erected for their gratification and reception. (Hear, hear.) I ask, then, that the Government of the country shall put itself in harmony with the spirit of the age, and shall endeavour at all events to follow in the wake of what private enterprise and public opinion are achieving. I have the fullest conviction that one step taken in that direction would be attended with important consequences, and would redound to the honour and credit of any Foreign Minister who, casting aside the old and musty maxims of diplomacy, should step out and take in hand the task which I have humbly submitted to the noble lord. (Hear, hear.) I beg to move “an address to Her Majesty, praying that she will direct the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to enter into communication with the Government of France, and endeavour to prevent in future that rivalry of warlike preparations in time of peace which has hitherto been the policy of the two Governments, and to promote, if possible, a mutual reduction of armaments.”





